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Iowa Selected for National Initiative to Advance Strategies for Supporting Family Caregivers

Des Moines, Iowa (November 13, 2018) – The Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) recently announced that Iowa — in addition to Alabama, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Virginia — was selected to join *Helping States Support Families Caring for an Aging America*, a multi-state learning group aimed at enhancing programs to support family caregivers of older adults. This national initiative, implemented by CHCS, is spearheaded and made possible by The John A. Hartford Foundation, the Milbank Memorial Fund, the May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust, and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

Today, nearly 17 million Americans provide care for an older parent, spouse, friend, or neighbor, and this number is expected to grow exponentially over the coming decades as the population ages. While state Medicaid agencies are the primary payers for long-term care services that support older, low-income adults, many state health care and social service systems are not fully prepared to meet the needs of this growing population and their families. Family caregivers can be part of the solution. While a few states have created wide-reaching policies to support these family caregivers, the majority have not made a significant investment in this critical support network.

Over the 18-month initiative, Iowa and the other participating states will receive technical assistance from CHCS and leading experts on developing strategies to support family caregivers. Types of activities states may pursue include:

- **Creating uniform policies** to govern complicated networks of family caregivers and health and social service agencies, which often have competing guidelines.
- **Rethinking how to identify and track family caregivers**, both to accurately measure community needs, and simplify patient/provider communication and medical decision-making.
- **Providing critical training** opportunities to family caregivers on topics such as chronic disease, managing medication regimens, and how to access community resources.
- **Expanding access to respite and adult day care**, services that allow caregivers to take a much-needed break from the 24/7 nature of caring for someone with complex medical needs, thereby reducing stress and preventing caregiver burnout.

“Family caregivers are the unsung heroes of health care, but too often feel overwhelmed and unprepared to address caregiving responsibilities,” said Rani Snyder, Program Director at The John A. Hartford Foundation. “We applaud these five states for working together and with us to better support families caring for older adults, and hope their efforts will spur other states to extend a hand to caregivers within their own communities.”

“We are so honored to have received this grant and look forward to working with the experts to ensure Iowa caregivers get the support they need,” said Director Linda Miller of the Iowa Department on Aging.

The five state teams, which include staff from Medicaid and a mix of other agencies that vary by state, including the Governor’s Office, Departments of Aging and Health and Human Services, state legislatures, and other local organizations, will participate in individual technical assistance calls, peer-to-peer “learning lab” webinars, and in-person meetings to learn from peers and other experts. An additional state participant will be added to the

initiative in the future. CHCS will distill lessons from the states' efforts, which will be shared broadly with stakeholders across the country. For more information, visit www.chcs.org/supportingfamilycaregivers/.

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About the Iowa Department on Aging

The Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) is an executive branch agency dedicated to making Iowa the premier state in which to live and retire. To meet that goal, the IDA works closely with the Iowa Commission on Aging and Iowa's six Agencies on Aging to develop a comprehensive, coordinated and cost-effective system of long-term living and community support services that helps individuals maintain health and independence in their homes and communities. More information is available at www.iowaaging.gov.

About The John A. Hartford Foundation

The John A. Hartford Foundation, based in New York City, is a private, nonpartisan, national philanthropy dedicated to improving the care of older adults. For more than three decades, the organization has been the leader in building a field of experts in aging and testing and replicating innovative approaches to care. The Foundation has three priority areas: creating age-friendly health systems, supporting family caregivers, and improving serious illness and end-of-life care. Working with its grantees, the Foundation strives to change the status quo and create a society where older adults can continue their vital contributions.

About the Milbank Memorial Fund

The Milbank Memorial Fund is an endowed operating foundation that works to improve the health of populations by connecting leaders and decision makers with the best available evidence and experience. Founded in 1905, the Fund engages in nonpartisan analysis, collaboration, and communication on significant issues in health policy. It does this work by publishing high-quality, evidence-based reports, books, and The Milbank Quarterly, a peer-reviewed journal of population health and health policy; convening state health policy decision makers on issues they identify as important to population health; and building communities of health policymakers to enhance their effectiveness.

About the May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust

Established in 1989, the May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust envisions a human community that recognizes each individual as vital to the strength, richness, and well-being of the whole, and that motivates, empowers, and invites each to contribute and participate according to his or her ability and potential. The Trust supports efforts to achieve significant, lasting, positive changes that promote well-being for Adults and Transitioning Youth with Disabilities, Elders, Foster Youth, and Veterans and Military Families.

About the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation fosters path-breaking scientific discovery, environmental conservation, patient care improvements and the preservation of the special character of the Bay Area.

About the Center for Health Care Strategies

The Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) is a nonprofit policy center committed to improving health care quality for low-income Americans. CHCS works with state and federal agencies, health plans, providers, and community-based organizations to develop innovative programs that better serve people with complex and high-cost health care needs.